



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

## DECEPTION AND REALITY.<sup>1</sup>

---

By PROFESSOR AUGUST KIRSCHMANN, University of Toronto.

---

Mankind is navigating the ship of its destiny, like the vessels of the ocean, at the boundary of two media. There is the limited sea of possible knowledge, whose depth man has sounded at a few points, whilst for the greater part he has not been able yet to reach the bottom. And there is the unlimited ethereal sphere of belief, into which he peers, but into which he can raise himself only to a little height, and that not without danger of an awkward fall. Now the reason for this failure to reach the solid bottom of the ocean—*i. e.*, the certain foundation of complex experience—and to safely soar through the loftiest heights of the atmosphere—*i. e.*, the realm of belief—lies chiefly therein that man insists, and perhaps thinks that he has to insist, according to his nature, in retaining the conditions which prevail at that boundary surface at which he is accustomed to live and move; where his keel and propeller and rudder dip a few feet or rods into the ocean of certainty, whilst his masts with their swelling sails, and the machinery which furnishes the propelling force are all in the atmosphere of belief. When he pretends to dive down into the depth of the ocean, be it with the submarine boat of the physical sciences or with the rather unfashionable diver's suit of the modern Psychologist, he always carries with him, or has pumped down to him, a quantity of that ever life-inspiring air of belief. And when he rises with balloons or flying machines, his airship, no matter whether it imitates more the fish or the bird,

---

<sup>1</sup>Asked to contribute to this commemorative number in honor of Dr. Stanley Hall I thought I could not do better than by choosing a subject, which, though as old as Philosophy, has never ceased to be of fundamental interest to the Philosopher as well as to the Psychologist and Pedagogue. Though perhaps not in literal agreement with his own views, the following considerations are intended to be in the direction of the noble aims of Stanley Hall, the Nestor of the Experimental Psychologists on this continent and the first and foremost one to apply the new science to the practical problems of education.

is absolutely uncontrollable unless he condescends to make constant use of the strong though invisible bands of that force which continually draws him downward toward his surface, viz., gravity, *i. e.*, attraction of the masses.

Thus man is not only materially but also philosophically a surface animal. But instead of admitting this duality of his intellectual nature—which is at once advantageous in giving him a marvellous facility of motion over that limiting surface, and disadvantageous in confining him more or less to it—and trying to improve his implements (as the submarine and aeronautic engineers do) and methods, he prefers to declare his limitations a deception and vainly grasps for something, which he persuades himself is beyond either of these “deceptive” spheres of his limitations. From the oldest times to the present day philosophers have indulged in hunting for a Reality behind the Given. They have said “the world of the senses is a deception, an illusion, behind which stands a real world of entities unknown and imperceptible to us;” and even those who claimed to avoid this error, and who called themselves Empiricists, did not start, as they pretended, with experience as it is given, but took uncritically for experience that which mankind had been accustomed for some thousands of years to call such. Just the Empiricists thought it expedient to degrade the “secondary” qualities as subjective, and correspondingly untrustworthy, although these secondary and subjective qualities are the ones which are immediately given and of undeniable reality. Spiritualists and materialists agreed as to the necessity of assuming an unchanging substance behind the bewildering and never-ceasing flux of “deceiving” phenomena. Realists and Nominalists, Rationalists and Empiricists, Idealists and Materialists, all agreed as to the legitimacy and the fundamental significance of the problem:

#### WHAT IS THE REAL?

Now we must emphatically deny the legitimacy of this question altogether. A test of solidity can only be made from a solid ground. To ask for a Reality is in itself a vicious circle; for you can only ask for it, if you are standing in it. We must have the reality in order to be able to ask for it or to question

it. Similarly, it is the greatest fallacy to assume, that starting from an uncertainty we could ever reach the certain, and no philosophic doctrine can be more unfounded than that which claims to start with and from doubt. On the contrary, standing amidst a multitude of undeniable, given realities, we claim the first question, the legitimate and necessary problem, which stands at the beginning of every consistent philosophic system should be just the opposite of the above question. We should ask:

#### IS THERE ANYTHING UNREAL? AND WHAT IS UNREAL?

It has always been claimed, either tacitly or expressly — though most Philosophers have long seen the inconsistency of the view—that our sense impressions do not furnish us a true image of reality. They more or less deceive us. In the ordinary perception of objects this deception is said to be at its lowest degree, in the case of an optical illusion; a mirage, in a higher degree; and finally in a hallucination it reaches its maximum. Let us examine the matter. We shall refer to the case of the mirage first. Is it really our senses which deceive us, when we see such a product of an unusual course of the rays of light? The traveller in the desert sees in the distance what he thinks is an oasis with green trees and a spring of refreshing water. But do his senses really tell that it is such? I think not; they only tell him that such and such parts of his vision field are filled with light sensations of such and such quality, saturation, intensity and space-configuration. And there can be no doubt about the "reality" of that which the senses directly give. But the traveller interprets these directly given facts. He infers: In the fifty or hundred or thousand cases, where I have had similar experiences, there followed, on approaching, such and such other sensations of sight and touch, etc. Since it has been so for so many times, it must be so this time. Here is where the deception comes in; for, no inference drawn from analogy or per inductionem can ever have complete certainty. All he could say, even if he had a million of positive cases before him, is, that he wished and believed it to be so. Thus not his senses deceive the traveller, but his own interpretation of what his senses give him does it; his unwillingness to admit, *that we can have certainty only about mathematical relations and about the*

*actual, that it is the present content of consciousness, never about that of the future.*

And so it is in all cases where we interpret the actually given states of consciousness with regard to coming events. The mirage and the ordinary perception of objects are only different in degree in this respect. For, if "I see an apple," the perception of sight at the time being does not include that side of the apple, which I do not see at that moment, the interior of the apple, nor its supposed effect on other senses. Whether certain expectations I have in the course of my interpretation of the given perceptions will later be realized or not is not a confirmation of, nor a detriment to, the reality of the facts given. Even a hallucination is not different in this sense. Whether an experience is a hallucination or a so called "real impression" is largely a question of majority, *i. e.*, of relative confirmation by other instances or other observers. A hallucination which everybody or even only the majority of people should experience could not be distinguished from what is called a 'real impression.' A man living alone on an island and not trained to make conclusions by analogy and induction would have absolutely no criterion for the distinction between reality and hallucination.

We call our dreams unreal, not because the directly given facts, which constitute them, *i. e.*, sensations and emotions, are less vivid or less "real" than those we experience in what we call our waking condition, but because their connections among themselves and with those of the waking state are of different character. The law of causality seems to be partially suspended in our dreams. But we must not forget that the law of causality is the result of induction and therefore not a matter of certainty but one of Belief. Thus the problem of the reality or unreality of dreams, too, is not a question of the facts concerned, but of the interpretation of the facts. If somebody who believes that everything in this world must have a purpose would ask me: What are dreams for? I would unhesitatingly answer: *To remind us of the falsehood of our conception of Reality.* I can easily imagine that some reader will be inclined at this point to accuse me of mysticism. But I claim, not the thinkers who hold with regard to certainty a subjectivistic view (claiming that certainty can never go beyond the subject)

but just those ones are the mystics, who try to establish two different kinds of reality, one for the states of consciousness, *i. e.* the given facts, the other for the so called "real objects," though they are unable to explain and define, or even to describe their "real objects" by anything else than by states of consciousness.

Let us now consider the case of an optical "illusion." Say a line which "*is straight*" is seen as curved. The phrase, the line really "*is*" straight, is only an inaccurate way of stating that under certain other conditions (different standpoint of the observer, presence or absence of certain other lines, etc.) we have the impression of straightness. No matter, whether the majority of cases or conditions or something else is responsible for our decision about the "real" nature of the line, we must insist that the line, when perceived as curved is just as real as when seen straight. Nobody has expressed himself more clearly on this point than Professor Wundt, when refuting the theory that optical illusions are based on erroneous judgment. Not the illusion, which, according to him, is an immediate perception, rests on judgment but the proposition that the perception contains an illusion.

This may be further illustrated by reference to contrast phenomena. A gray paper on a green ground assumes a redish hue. Helmholtz calls such contrast effects illusions, due to false or erroneous judgments. He does so by virtue of the pre-conceived—though almost universally accepted—opinion, that the inferred statements about objects, as for instance "this object *is red*," imply a higher degree of reality than the statements of directly given facts, as *e. g.*, "I see red."

If you throw at day time by means of an electric arc lantern, with objectives removed but provided with a colored glass, say blue-green, a diffuse light—showing no sharp outlines—on a gray or white wall, the color of this secondary illumination will scarcely be noticed, while the shadows on it, *i. e.*, the places where there is only diffuse daylight, will appear in a beautiful rose or pink color. Nobody can fail to notice that in this case the contrast colors are by far more vivid and conspicuous than the "real" ones in operation, and people who know nothing about contrast, and about the instrumental ar-

rangement of this experiment, will swear that there "is" red light. Everybody will see red. Now what is there erroneous about this judgment which states nothing but a fact? Indeed, if you should succeed in persuading an observer, by showing him that there "is" physically only colorless light, to state that it is only an illusion, this will be an erroneous judgment, for he no longer states what he "sees," but what, on account of customary considerations about "real" objects, he believes "is" there. If we look through proper glasses (*e. g.* red and blue-green) at a landscape stereoscopically projected on a screen (left and right picture, each in one of the above colors, superposed, using as transparent screen a large plate of ground glass and disguising the edges of the not entirely overlapping pictures by appropriate drapery), we have the impression as if we looked through an open window at a real landscape. That, nevertheless, we are not convinced of the reality of the objects seen, is not due to inferior or deviating properties of the perceptions of sight in this case, but to the circumstance that we have other senses to control that of sight, namely the dermal and kinaesthetic senses. But the data which these senses give have no reality superior to that of the sense of sight. If we could at the same time, where we produce artificially the stereoscopic effect for the sense of sight, deceive correspondingly the other senses, the "illusion would be perfect;" *i. e.*, we would by no means be able to distinguish whether it was "sham" or "reality."

The definition of a "real" impression in contradistinction to a "deceptive" illusion or hallucination is usually accomplished by reference to the "real object." It is said, a real impression is one caused by a real object. But this is so obviously arguing in a circle, that, I think, a modern Psychologist should be ashamed of such a definition. For, it is quite plain, that what he calls a real object is itself nothing but an impression or a complex of impressions. The distinction "real" or "not real" is—and indeed quite arbitrarily—based on the presence or absence of certain impressions. Consequently we cannot base any classification of the impressions on the reality of the object. The impression is the immediately given and the simple, and the object is the complex and

inferred. Modern Psychology has done marvellous work in tracing the quantitative relations between the physical and the psychical, between stimulus and sensation. But if the modern Psychologist insists upon defining the "stimulus" as something else than a complex of sensations, he is standing still on the standpoint of the so-called naïve realism or better naïve materialism, which is characterized by its superficiality and gross ignorance of the problems.

The great psychological problem should not be: How does it happen that such and such quantities of the physical stimulus only produce such and such quantities of sensation? Properly speaking it should be this: *How does it happen that starting from such and such given facts, viz., the quantities of perceived sensations, we arrive at the idea of such and such stimuli?* It will be objected, that such a view would lead to subjectivism. But first I claim that we have to treat the questions with regard to *truth* and not with regard to *what they lead to*. And, secondly, the above view leads to subjectivism only in so far as it refers to absolute *knowledge*, not with regard to *belief*. And there is a great difference between the solipsistic subjectivist who declares: "There exists nothing but I myself;" and the subjectivist of the above view—if it can be called subjectivism at all—who modestly confesses, "I can have certainty only about that which takes part in my consciousness." My knowledge (*i. e.*, certainty) is extremely limited; but the sphere of belief is unlimited. And he may add: Do not think that I regard belief as something inferior to or less essential in life than knowledge. I only regard the two as *different* and claim we should not confuse them, as we continually do, and indeed not only in ordinary life, but also in science and religion. It must be emphasized that we cannot make a single step even in the most exact science unless we get impulse and direction from belief. But in the propositions, which we formulate as the results of our philosophic and scientific investigations, we should keep carefully separate *elements of knowledge* (absolute certainty) and *elements of belief*. The greatest errors which mankind have made at the expense of their material welfare and intellectual progress can be traced back to the neglect of this simple rule.

Besides all this the words "real" and "reality" are used quite ambiguously. By real is sometimes meant that which has part in consciousness. In this sense, everything is real that involves no contradiction; the idea of freedom, love and hatred, the memory image of a past event and the imagination of the future. All states of consciousness then are real. But there is another, quite arbitrarily chosen meaning of the above terms, according to which the criterion of reality consists in certain special relations in space and time. Thus the impression of a person or object seen at the time is called real, whilst the memory image or imagination of such object or person is denied the character of reality. There is indeed an essential difference, not only with reference to intensity, as some Psychologists have claimed. The images of memory and imagination, though possessing space relations, lack that definite localization in visual space and that palpability for the sense of touch which characterizes the direct impressions. But that they have not all the properties of the latter does not justify us in treating them as if they had no properties at all. Thus we should not say that memory images and products of imagination are not real, for they are just as real as other states of consciousness. The only thing we could say is, that they do not have certain properties which certain other states of consciousness possess. Thus if we were to speak correctly we should either attribute reality to both classes of presentations and distinguish them according to their characteristic properties; or, if we would agree to designate that definiteness and palpability in space and time as "reality in a narrower sense," we should be careful never to confuse the two meanings. But they are constantly confused by the majority of people, and a good deal of the struggle between philosophical systems arises from this confusion. Most people are not aware of the fact that they refer to different kinds of reality, when they say: "The love of my country is real" and "my imagination of a dragon is not real."

No term is less appropriate as a basis for a classification of philosophical systems than "real," as can be already seen from the fact, that what in the time of the Scholastics was called "Realism" should, according to the present nomencla-

ture, be styled as extreme idealism. The term Realism must, on closer inspection, appear fallacious and misleading, or at least superfluous. If we call him a Realist who assumes that *something* is real, then everybody is a realist. Thus, for instance, the idealist thinks that his conceptions and ideas are the real. And even the most radical sceptic assumes the reality of his doubts; and his whole system commits suicide at the very moment of its birth, if he drops this last reality.

Thus "Realism" cannot designate the theory which believes in *some* reality. There must be added an arbitrary decision excluding certain experiences or facts, or properties of facts, in favor of certain others, from the domain of the real. But then we claim the term is superfluous, for we have in this case a sufficient number of well recognized designations. Thus, *e. g.*, if the realist was said to be he who declares only the above mentioned palpable space properties the true criterion of reality, the term is superfluous, for we have for this view the word materialism. If, on the other hand, Realism is defined as the view which admits of other realities besides the given states of consciousness, we have already the terms Dualism and Phenomenalism, etc.

The term Realism, even if not ambiguously employed, must always be misleading, for it suggests an opposition which it never can have. There is neither a contrary nor a contradictory opposite possible to *the real*. The "Unreal" and the "Nothing" reveal themselves as empty words, pseudoconceptions, as soon as we try to predicate anything of them. I was once heartily laughed at by the students, when I declared, mathematically I could tell them how the Lord created the world. I said it was very simple: He took "nothing" and divided it by "nothing" (%) and then He had everything He wanted. The students who at first glance certainly regarded this as an unbecoming jest, unworthy of the classroom, changed their minds when we discussed the matter, and when they saw, that there is no such thing (perception, presentation, idea or conception) as "Nothing." The fisherman who comes home saying "I caught nothing" only uses inaccurate language which here stands for: I did not catch any fish. And the person who, as a consequence of a posthypnotic suggestion, did not

notice a certain other person and when asked, what he saw in that place, answered "Nothing," simply told a lie. For if you see at all, every part of your vision field must be always filled with some sensation, and even the blind man does not speak correctly, if he says "I see nothing" instead of "I do not see at all." When we speak of "Nothing" we do not mean the absence of all reality; we only mean the absence of something (*i. e.* property or fact, or state of consciousness) replaced by something else.

With regard to the second part of the above mentioned mathematical joke it must not be forgotten that "dividing by nothing" is by no means identical with "not dividing," which is dividing by *one*. "Nothing" and "Dividing by nothing" are terms, with which the naïve mind believes itself to be familiar, and which it consequently uses as if they were backed by some ideas, whilst they are only empty words, not even accompanied by the slightest imagination. Thus, even if we should be inclined to say that "Nothing," the coveted "Nirvana" exists only in the mind of some philosopher, we should say too much; for what exists there is only the word, accompanied by the silent or express but untrue statement, by which the philosopher deceives himself or others, that he has ideas, which correspond to the alleged meaning of that word.

There is only one way to get an opposite to the "Real," namely if we make it identical with the "True." Then the "Untrue," *i. e.*, the product of lying, is "unreal," with which we may well agree, though it must not be forgotten that what is untrue, unreal in the lie is the *meaning* attributed to the actions or words which constitute the lie, not the actions or words themselves, for they are as states of consciousness as real as others. In other words, Lie, the Untruth or the Unreal, no matter whether regarded from the standpoint of the speaker or that of the hearer, *is never a matter of fact, but always a matter of interpretation or statement*. Where there is no interpretation (either a statement in presentations and conceptions to one's self or in words or other symbolic actions to others) there can be no untruth, no unreal.

Thus we come to the important conclusion, *that there can be nothing untrue in this world but men's statements or utterances*

(perhaps animals' too). *If there is anything unreal in this world it must be and can only be the product of human lie.*

And further: Since statement and interpretation are what they are only by virtue of their character as voluntary acts, since no statement or interpretation is possible without the will to state or interpret, *there can be no untruth without a will to lie* (there is no such thing as objective untruth) and *there can be nothing unreal unless there is a will to produce such by lying.*

Here we are at the very pivot on which all the problems of clairvoyance, of prophecy and inspiration hinge. How can there be an untruth in a statement, if there is not the slightest will to be untrue in the speaker and no trace of a will to wrongly interpret in the hearer? If a man speaks without letting his inclinations and desires interfere with truth, if he completely avoids that careless lying which characterizes our ordinary use of language, if there is no trace of an intention in him at the time of deviating from truth, and if the hearer in his interpretation of what he hears is equally free of the will to lie, can there be anything untrue or unreal in what is uttered and heard? There can be nothing false, erroneous or fallacious in it; *it must be true.* For all falsehood and fallacy rests on lie, the will to be false, even in those cases where we speak of error; and this will for falsehood is here completely absent. Thus if we would stick to absolute truth—of course subjective truth is meant, for there is no objective untruth—we could all be inspired, we could all be prophets. Of course a good many things which we are accustomed to say under the present conditions we should not say then at all. *E. g.,* we should never pretend to know anything with certainty about the future, except that which we can deduce mathematically. We should never state as certainty, what is a matter of belief (which we now continuously do, *e. g.,* with regard to causation). We should never claim to "know" the intentions of others, the events of the past and the laws of nature for the future, and however great our knowledge would be, we should never deny that with regard to *action* "we walk by faith (belief) and not by sight (certainty);'" we should not identify ourselves with our body and we should not spend so much energy of individuals, corporations and nations in the acquisition of goods of

chiefly imaginary value. We should not make use of ambiguous terms, pseudo-conceptions and pseudo-distinctions. We should not, under the pretense of the promotion of Progress, Freedom and Civilization induce the crowd to commit injustices and cruelties, and to do on collective responsibility what no truthful individual would like to be responsible for. And last, not least, we should not fail to recognize that the much demanded and much professed "freedom of speech" is a blessing only when in necessary correlation with the "Duty of Truth," without which it amounts to nothing less than the "Tyranny of Lie."

It has been customary with many philosophers since the time of Socrates to regard *sin* as the result of *error*. Regarded in the light of the above considerations, I think the truth is just the reverse. *All error is based on sin*, and especially the arch-type of sin, without which no deed is a sin at all, viz., *lying*. If we would take the events of our experience just as they are given, without stating as necessary and actual what is not necessary and actual, without attributing properties to those complexes of states of consciousness called things, which they do not have, without giving induction and analogy more prerogatives than is their due, or, in one word, *if we would never lie, there would be no error*. For, it is not the facts or their relations themselves which contain or constitute the error; it is always the interpretation or statement regarding them. If we make an error in a mathematical deduction we must have somewhere regarded or stated something as certain or necessary which was not so. And it must not be said, that the error consists just in our not noticing where we did this; for we are always aware of it, if we take something for granted, as absolutely certain where, out of indolence or for other reasons, we have omitted careful and thorough inquiry. And if we indeed did not notice it, it is not because we did not commit that sin of omission at that point, but because we committed it also at other points, where, however, the facts happened to be in accordance with our belief, which we carelessly treated as knowledge.

But wherein consists the sin, which is at the base of all errors in ordinary life, in scientific inquiry and even in relig-

ious endeavor? It is chiefly the unwillingness to admit that our field of knowledge, *i. e.*, of absolute (either apodictic or assertive) certainty, is extremely limited and that in all our actions, in all our striving for success and progress, *belief reigns supreme*. We are all too apt to give the one of the few fundamental distinctions of which we are capable, namely that between the *agreeable* and the *disagreeable*, the preference over the other, namely that between *true* and *untrue*; we sacrifice truth to pleasure. Man must seek pleasure; it is the very nature of his activity of choosing, preferring. Even if he chastises himself, if he seeks death, he seeks what from some standpoint is preferable, *i. e.*, more agreeable to him. *It can therefore be no sin to strive for the agreeable, for happiness. But we should never seek the agreeable at the expense of truth.* And this is what we do, if we state as certain, as actual or necessary, what at best is a matter of belief. We have become accustomed to this kind of lying through thousands of years of training. We do it not only in ordinary life and conversation; we do it as public men before public audiences, in political discussions, in lecture rooms, and even in the pulpit. We state a thing as true or certain, because we like it to be so. The greater part of our phraseology in ordinary daily life, and a good deal of that of science and philosophy, too, partakes in this system of at least careless lying. This, I might call "hereditary" sin of seeking the agreeable at the expense of the subjective truth has brought about in common life a low materialistic utilitarianism, which identifies man with his body and his noblest aims with the acquisition of property, influence and money. In political life it has created a mutual and almost irreparable distrust between individuals as well as between nations, a tyranny of the crowd and its leader, the unscrupulous catchword-demagogue, a very superficial and unjust press and an ignoble party spirit which makes nations waste their energy in a fruitless tug of war between factions. In the religious sphere, finally, it has produced an unintelligent indifference toward all matters of faith in one class of people and in another class a narrow-minded, self-righteous Pharisaism, which in condemning every one who is not like-minded, is more remote than ever from the Christianity taught by Christ,

which is infinite love and forgiveness; forgiveness to every one and for everything except transgression of the law of Truth.

So much as regards the philosophical side of the subject. Let us now turn to consider briefly its pedagogical implications.

We have tried in the foregoing to show, that there is nothing unreal in this world except the products of human lying. The first condition for an essential progress in the direction of a greater perfection of the human race will therefore be a greater adherence to the truth than we were accustomed to, hitherto, or, as we might also say, a greater objectivity. But, if we use the latter term, we must not forget, that, though it sounds paradoxical, *the greatest objectivity consists in the strictest adherence to the subjective truth.* It should consequently be the foremost aim of the educationalist to incite the pupil first of all to that thorough truthfulness from which we are so far remote to-day and which is, though perhaps not itself the highest of human and Christian virtues, certainly the *conditio sine qua non* of all. Indeed, if we do not make more earnest efforts in this direction, all our professed Humanity, Civilization and Christianity will remain sham and deception.

Here the question of the educational ideal must be raised. What should our pedagogical ideal be? It is commonly said: *The man of sound principles, the strong character, harmonious development of all faculties, or the perfect man.* Now with regard to the first two of these ideals we claim that they are meaningless expressions, mere empty words, worthless pseudo-conceptions, which cannot stand the analysis of a thorough logical criticism. The only sound principle which I should be inclined to admit is "*to have no principles*" but to act always according to our sense of truth, that spark of divinity in us which we call our conscience and which urges us to decide all questions which involve moral responsibility uninfluenced by desire, habit and imitation, with regard to nothing else than truth. If we adopt as a principle or maxim a proposition of mathematical certainty or necessity, it is superfluous, for our conscience or sense of truth tells us to act according to it anyway. And if we adopt as a principle a proposition which is not absolutely certain, it might turn out later to be false; and then we have pledged ourselves to do wrong in all cases; namely, either to

act against our principle or against our conscience. Similarly with regard to the other pedagogical catch-word "character," if it is intended to mean anything else than "individuality," "individual quality," I claim that *the best character is he who has no character at all*, but who always acts and speaks according to truth. He at least is the only "good" character; all others must be "bad" ones. If some good Christian is not convinced yet of the correctness of this argument about character and principles, I would like to ask him: What character had Christ and what principles did he follow and teach?

And as to the other two ideals, there will be almost as many opinions as there are individual thinking beings in this world as to what is "the perfect man" and what is "harmonious." And so with all other pedagogical ideals. No matter what great perfection is claimed by the word which designates them, they are at least as imperfect as the person who "conceives" them; and if we conduct education in fixed tracks, directed towards such inadequate, vague, and imperfect ideals, we set unjust limitations to possible development and progress.

There is too much of such positive ideals in the educational world, especially on this continent; there is too great a tendency yet toward that mediæval method of education, which makes the pupil go through all the little byways the teacher went through, and thus makes him at best as good as the latter; and which regards him who can best recite his lesson, as best fit for teacher. The result of this method is not a new generation with new ideals—for we do not allow them to form their own—but a generation of average men, with here and there a faddist between, a suppression of all originality, a continuously increasing tendency to think as little as possible and to act only as a member of a crowd.

We should, on the contrary, lead our pupils to avoid the errors and unnecessary byways through which we had to go and try to bring them to a point where they have a horizon broader than ours. We should help them to reach the periphery of our own sphere in the shortest and simplest possible way. We should urge them on without forcing them in a certain direction. We should help them to keep on the straight line, but we should let them choose the direction for themselves.

Thus I claim: We should have *no positive ideals of education*.

We should confine ourselves to the negative, prophylactic and preventative method. We should cut off such off-shoots as are clearly based on error and falsehood. In other words: We should not attempt to force the tree, by trimming, one-sided direction of light and watering, into artificial forms of our own biased imagination. We should remove the dry and rotten branches, but for the rest, we should let it grow as God and Nature will.

Many educationalists are somewhat afraid of originality in the pupil, because they do not know whether it is going to develop into the qualities of a genius or into those of a scoundrel. But if we would educate to Truth and not allow the slightest transgression of that divine law,—I believe that all theories, that lying is admissible under certain conditions are based on fallacies,—all originality which could pass then, would be of the nature of genius.

But I hear the objection: Do we not always teach children to be true, and even punish them severely if they lie? Yes we do, but in a half hearted manner, which bears the untruth on its forehead. If we detect a boy lying, we put a very stern face on, punish him and tell him that it is a great sin. But shortly afterwards he hears grown-up people contradict themselves or state things as certainties of which he can clearly see, that they cannot be certain. Or he hears his parents or teachers or friends speak *of* other persons, what they could never say *to* these people. He is taught to be scrupulously honest, but he soon realizes that grown-up people are not so themselves, that the modern business principle is not to excel others in the quantity and quality of work, but in the smart way of taking advantage of the comparatively greater honesty and innocence of the others and to make the greatest possible profit by the least amount of work, or even by doing no work at all except that of lying and filling one's own purse.

The boy is taught in church and school that all men are brethren, but when he comes home he finds that his parents "cannot associate with such uneducated people as mechanics or laborers." In words he is taught not to be egotistical and to love his neighbors as himself, but by the actions of the people he is taught the contrary; namely, to take advantage where he can, and that his own party, his own creed, his own nationality

is superior to all others. He must see, that almost the whole world hypocritically sides with Armenians and Bulgarians, without ever examining their cause, simply because they happen to have the name of "Christians,"

He is taught that only such competition is noble and worth imitating, as reaches its aim without damaging and hindering the other competitors. We should try to excel even whilst helping the others on. But what he observes around him is chiefly the other kind of competition which succeeds by cunning tricks (*i. e.* lies) and tripping up the rivals.

He is taught that gambling is an abominable vice and he sees that the man who lost his fortune by gambling—even if he gambled honestly—is the object of utter contempt. But he cannot help to notice also, that the successful gambler, no matter whether he made his fortune in Monte Carlo or in Wall Street, is worshipped as a smart fellow and his tithes are welcomed even by the churches.

Whenever a noble aim is ostentatiously proclaimed it is done in the name and for the sake of "Humanity" and "Civilization." But when less noble aims are pursued in the interest of his own nation, party, family or business, and even the most ignoble means are resorted to, it is excused by the phrase: such is "human" nature. He further sees that if some one has done wrong and confesses it or is convicted, he is, in spite of all professed Christianity, never allowed to start anew. He is an outcast and despised forever. But if he succeeds in lying himself out of it, he is a smart fellow. He reads the papers and sees that even the evidence given under oath in court by witnesses and expert witnesses is full of contradictions.

On the basis of such and other experiences the child cannot fail to form his opinion as follows: Truth is a fine and beautiful ideal, indeed it is more, for it is written with ineffaceable characters upon my own heart as the fundamental moral and intellectual law. But it seems that people are not very particular to keep this law which they so loudly profess, and no authority seems to be willing to strictly enforce it. Since I do not want to swim against the current and to be crucified, I shall do as the others do: I shall profess what the people call "Humanity" but I shall act according to their "human nature." I shall

never admit to have erred or to be in the wrong. I shall stick to the truth as long as it is to my advantage; in one word: I shall *profess* truth and *do* as I like. Only children and fools, according to the proverb, find it pardonable to speak the truth pure and simple; and I shall soon cease to be numbered with either class.

We are always inclined to treat children as if they had a very weak intelligence but a strong will. I think the case is just the reverse: The child has usually a very weak will but a very strong intellect. It is for me a great question, whether the so-called mental development of the child is really a development of the intellectual power or only an adaptation of an unalterable intellect to the mode and means of expression to be found in the surroundings and at the disposal of a developing body. This problem can scarcely be solved and may in the last instance turn out to be a pseudo-problem. But so much is sure: most children have at a time, when they can scarcely express themselves in words and gestures, completely grasped the equivocal nature of the teaching of truthfulness, which they get from grown-up people. Apart from the above problem as to the growth of the intellect itself or of its power of adaptation and expression, we are usually inclined to underrate the intelligence of children for two reasons: First, because they do not govern perfectly that external object, which is called their own body; and second because they use language in a way which appears to us "childish." But we must not forget, that the body and its organs, and that very arbitrary and inconsistent system of symbols which we call language, are not the intellect itself but only its inadequate instruments and means of expression.

Summarizing the foregoing I venture to say:

1. There is nothing unreal in this world except the products of human lying.
2. The progress of human perfection depends on the degree to which we succeed in eliminating untruth.
3. We should renounce all positive ideals of education except Truth. We should educate to perfect Truthfulness and leave the rest to God and Nature. For:

Truth alone will make us free.